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BOOKS OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN HISTORY

English Court Hand, A. D. 1066 to 1500, illustrated chiefly from the Public Records. By CHARLES JOHNSON, M.A., and HILARY JENKINSON, B.A., F.S.A. Part I., Text; Part II., Plates. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1915. Pp. xlviii, 250; xlv plates.)

ONE of the most serious gaps in the equipment of instruction in palaeography and diplomatics has been the absence of any working collection of facsimiles of English documents. It is true that valuable matter of this sort is found in the publications of the Ordnance Survey and the British Museum and here and there throughout the series issued by the two palaeographical societies; but none of these collections is systematic or complete for this purpose, and all are lacking in convenience, cheapness, and the comment and analysis necessary for the student. This deficiency has now been well supplied by two thoroughly competent scholars of the Public Record Office. A volume of forty-four plates reproduces eighty-one different documents, extending from a charter of the Conqueror to an account of 1501 and chosen so as to illustrate at the same time the development of writing and the principal types and series of English records. The accompanying volume of text gives in most instances a transcription and in every case careful comment upon the peculiarities of the original. The remainder of the text, something like a hundred and ten pages, is devoted to an introductory account of court hand as distinguished from book hand, a brief treatment of abbreviations, and a detailed discussion, with the aid of abundant engravings, of the history of each letter and sign throughout the period and the kind of writing covered by the book. "No effort has been made to select documents of special historical or artistic significance: we have rather attempted", the authors say, "to give specimens of the average humdrum material of historical research and to show the beginner how to deal with ordinary problems which the utilization of such material presents." The attempt has certainly been successful and will create a real obligation on the part of the historical profession.

The purpose is strictly practical, and the treatment is frankly empirical. The material has been chosen almost entirely from the Record Office and evidently with an eye to the great administrative divisions of the central government. The student is not brought in contact with the types of local record, such as manorial documents or ecclesiastical registers, and no reference is made to documents of foreign (*e. g.*, papal) origin which occur in English repositories; nor is he told how to follow up such matters in the bibliography, which contains no books on local records or on diplomatics and even omits Giry, in spite of its convenience for chronological reference. It will thus be seen that the collection is at once more restricted and more systematic than such Continental parallels as the facsimiles of the *École des Chartes*. For the

most part the comment is strictly palaeographical; the chief exception is a certain number of glosses on technical terms or uncommon usages, notes inserted on no apparent principle and clearly out of place in a palaeographical treatise. In regard to furnishing transcriptions and references the practice is inconsistent. Thus plate XVIIb is not transcribed, while XVIIIa is printed without mention of Maitland's use of the roll in his *Select Pleas in Manorial Courts*. It would seem that in a work designed for students transcriptions should have been provided even in the case of texts printed elsewhere, for many of the works cited are, like the Pipe Roll of 31 Henry I., not always easily accessible. It would have been of some advantage to students to indicate by italics or brackets the resolution of abbreviations; it is hardly a good example to them to print the periods before and after an initial for which the full name has been substituted in the text. In plate IIa the gap in the last line should have been noted and an effort made to decipher the whole of the proper name at the end of the preceding line, where the reader's attention might also have been called to the practice of writing above the line in such cases. In general however the work of transcription seems accurate and the comment judicious.

CHARLES H. HASKINS.

Survey of the Honour of Denbigh, 1334. Edited by PAUL VINOGRADOFF, F.B.A., Corpus Professor of Jurisprudence, University of Oxford, and FRANK MORGAN, M.A., Tutor of Keble College, Oxford. [Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales, vol. I.] (London: The British Academy. 1914. Pp. cxxiv, 347.)

THIS is the first volume issued by the British Academy, which proposes to undertake the systematic publication of a series of records dealing with the social and economic history of England. Denbigh was a Welsh honor but the Survey has a wider interest than that of purely local history, for in depicting the struggle between Welsh and English customs, it describes "Celtic institutions which lie at the foundation of the history of Great Britain". Wales was conquered in 1282 and the Survey of Denbigh was made in 1334 and is therefore near enough in point of time to give a "picture of the condition of affairs before the conquest, of the effects of that political change, together with glimpses of the transition from a pastoral to an agricultural condition, from a tribal to a tenurial basis". The unique value of the document is due to three things: it is very detailed and generally exact in its information; it was made before the Black Death and so the effects of that catastrophe do not obscure the picture of the pre-conquest Welsh organization; the honor is so mountainous that agriculture was very slowly introduced and as a result the original tribal and pastoral organization persisted here longer than in other parts of the principality.¹ It was

¹ Seebohm, *Tribal System in Wales*, p. 29.